

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 DRC-01 IO-14

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3508

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, UK

SUBJECT: TUC CONGRESS - "ALL GOOD MEN TO THE AID OF THEIR
PARTY"

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE TUC CONGRESS, WHICH OPENED IN BRIGHTON
YESTERDAY (SEPTEMBER 2), REFLECTS THE DETERMINED ALMOST
RELENTLESS EFFORT BY THE BULK OF THE TUC LEADERSHIP -
PERSONIFIED MOST SHARPLY BY JACK JONES, TRANSPORT
WORKERS' CHIEF - TO DEMONSTRATE WORKERS' UNITY AND
SOLIDARITY WITH THE LABOR PARTY AS IT MOVES TOWARD A
LIKELY ELECTION IN EARLY OCTOBER. END SUMMARY.

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2. THE TEST OF THE TUC-LABOR PARTY UNITY CENTERS, OF COURSE, ON THE HIGHLY PUBLICIZED SOCIAL CONTRACT - WHEREBY THE UNIONS IN RETURN FOR SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS, MANY OF WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN DISPENSED BY WILSON AND COMPANY - WOULD AGREE TO LIMIT THEIR WAGE DEMANDS - AND IN THE PROCESS ALLOW THE LABOR GOVERNMENT TO PROCLAIM ITSELF A BETTER GUARANTOR OF STABILITY THAN ITS POLITICAL OPPONENTS.

3. THIS SCENARIO, HOWEVER, MAY NOT WORK OUT QUITE AS IT WAS SCRIPTED. WHILE AN OVERWHELMING NUMBER OF TUC UNIONS HAVE ALREADY AGREED TO SUPPORT THE SOCIAL CONTRACT, HUGH SCANLON'S HUGE AMALGAMATED UNION OF ENGINEERING WORKERS, TOGETHER WITH A FEW SMALLER UNIONS, CONTINUE THEIR REFUSAL TO JOIN THE BAND. (THE AUEW APPROVED AN ANTI-CONTRACT RESOLUTION ON SATURDAY PRESENTED BY ITS COMMUNIST-LED WHITE COLLAR WING, TASS, BUT ITS OPPOSITION IS BY NO MEANS ONLY DUE TO EXTREME LEFT-WING PRESSURES.)

4. IT IS THUS LIKELY THAT THE GIFT OF UNITY AND SOLIDARITY TO BE OFFERED PRIME MINISTER WILSON WHEN HE ARRIVES IN BRIGHTON ON THURSDAY (SEPT. 5) WILL BE LESS OPULENT THAN HE HAD HOPED. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE AUEW'S INTRANSIGENCE, IF MAINTAINED AS EXPECTED, WILL ALLOW THE LABOR PARTY'S OPPONENTS TO CHALLENGE WILSON'S CLAIM THAT HIS PARTY ALONE CAN GET THE WORKERS TO COOPERATE IN RESTORING THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC HEALTH.

5. IN HIS KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO THE CONGRESS, TUC PRESIDENT LORD ALLEN HAMMERED HARD ON THE UNITY AND SOLIDARITY THEME. HE WARNED THAT THE "SOCIAL CONTRACT PLACES A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY ON POLITICAL AND TRADE UNION LEADERSHIP" AND THAT "NEITHER PARTY CAN AFFORD IF THEY WISH TO BE CREDIBLE TO IGNORE THE LONG-TERM IMPLICATION OF FAILURE". AND IN AN APPARENT THRUST AT SCANLON'S UNION, ALLEN ADDED THAT "NO ONE UNION CAN ACT IN TOTAL ISOLATION."

6. IN THE MEANWHILE, THE CONGRESS WILL DO ALL IT CAN TO CREATE WHAT ONE REPORTER DESCRIBED AS A "JAMBOREE" MOOD IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ANTICIPATION OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S DRAMATIC ARRIVAL ON THE BRIGHTON BEACH ON THURSDAY. IN FACT, FOREIGN MINISTER CALLAGHAN IS HERE - IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE LABOR PARTY AND FRATERNAL DELEGATE TO THE CONGRESS - TO HELP DEEPEN THE "ON TO VICTORY" ATMOSPHERE OF THIS MOST POLITICAL OF TUC CONGRESSES IN RECENT YEARS. OTHER LABOR GOVERNMENT'S STALWARTS HAVE EITHER ALREADY VISITED BRIGHTON - SUCH AS MICHAEL FOOT - OR ARE EXPECTED TO DO SO

DURING THE WEEK.

7. IT IS ABUNDENTLY CLEAR THAT THE CONGRESS WILL DO ALL IN ITS POWER ON MOST KEY ISSUES TO AVOID EMBARRASSING THE LABOR GOVERNMENT DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. FOR EXAMPLE, THE HARD-LINE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR BRITAIN'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EC, WHICH WAS PUT FORWARD BY THE CINEMATOGRAPHERS' UNION, LED BY LEFT LEANING ALLEN SAPPER, HAS ALREADY BEEN SHUNTED ASIDE BY THE TUC RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE. INSTEAD, THE TUC IS EXPECTED TO REITERATE ITS CURRENT POLICY OF "CONTINUED OPPOSITION TO BRITAIN'S MEMBERSHIP IN THE EC."

8. THE MORE THAT 1,000 DELEGATES (REPRESENTING OVER TEN MILLION MEMBERS FROM 109 UNIONS, INCLUDING ALMOST ALL OF THE UNIONS EXPELLED LAST YEAR) WILL DEBATE THESE AND OTHER QUESTIONS DURING THE COURSE OF THE WEEK. THEY RANGE WIDELY OVER MANY FIELDS, INCLUDING WORKERS' PARTICIPATION ON THE BOARDS OF UK COMPANIES. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE MOOD OF THE CONGRESS TOWARDS MOST ISSUES IS ONE OF COMPROMISE, AND IN GENERAL OF DETERMINATION TO HELP WIN A LARGER MANDATE FOR THE LABOR GOVERNMENT.
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